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Normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Summary

The General Assembly, in paragraph 67 (c) of its resolution 64/289, by which it established the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), requested the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women to submit to the Commission on the Status of Women "an annual report on the normative aspects of the Entity's work and on its implementation of the policy guidance provided by the Commission". The present report is submitted in accordance with that request and summarizes the normative aspects of the work of UN-Women and elaborates on the Entity's contribution to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in gender-specific as well as in sectoral intergovernmental processes. It provides information on how UN-Women has contributed to the implementation of the policy guidance provided by the Commission, including examples of programme work and activities at the country level.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report summarizes how the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) carried out its normative mandate in 2012, as set out in General Assembly resolution 64/289, as well as in line with the goal of its strategic plan, 2011-2013 (UNW/2011/9) to support the development of a comprehensive set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and women's empowerment that is dynamic and responds to new and emerging issues, challenges and opportunities. The Entity has contributed to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women not only in gender-specific intergovernmental processes but also in relevant sectoral intergovernmental processes. In this regard, UN-Women sought to expand and deepen norms and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women, both as an end in itself and as an essential step in the realization of human rights, peace and security and development.

2. The Entity has delivered on its normative mandate through its work with and substantive support to the Commission on the Status of Women, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, to which UN-Women reports routinely on agenda items on gender equality and the advancement of women. UN-Women also engaged with sectoral intergovernmental bodies to strengthen attention to gender equality and the empowerment of women in their deliberations and outcomes.

3. In its work with all these bodies, UN-Women has combined various approaches, including building strategic partnerships with stakeholders to strengthen consensus on gender equality and women's empowerment priorities. It has incorporated best practices and lessons learned from its regional and national experiences in its normative work. UN-Women has also worked with Governments, including with national parliaments, gender ministries and other relevant ministries, and civil society, to translate agreed norms into national policies and programmes and to monitor and accelerate their implementation.

4. In accordance with the Entity's coordination mandate, UN-Women is also supporting and mobilizing the United Nations system to uphold and incorporate these norms, particularly those on gender mainstreaming, in their respective areas of work. UN-Women is working to build and strengthen a knowledge base that reflects substantive information and know-how as well as lessons learned and experiences in implementation in order to strengthen its own positioning to undertake these functions and support this work.

5. Subsequent sections of the present report summarize the work and some of the outcomes of UN-Women engagement in various intergovernmental processes. Section II discusses how the Entity has worked to deepen the normative aspects of work on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Section III addresses specific aspects of the work of UN-Women that support the implementation of the policy guidance provided by the Commission on the Status of Women. The section focuses on a central message contained in the guidance transmitted on several occasions in the agreed conclusions and other outcomes of the Commission, to promote the incorporation, integration or mainstreaming of gender perspectives in

the development and implementation of national legislation, policies, strategies, programmes and projects.[1]

II. Strengthening and deepening the normative aspects of the work of the Entity

A. Commission on the Status of Women

6. Since the submission of the previous report on the topic (E/CN.6/2012/2) to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-sixth session, in 2012, UN-Women has further strengthened and intensified its activities and engagement with the Commission in order to enable the Commission to successfully fulfil its function as the global policymaking body dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment and advancement of women.

7. The Entity's support to the Commission relates to the preparation of outputs and activities mandated by Economic and Social Council resolutions 2006/9 and 2009/15, which outline the working methods of the Commission and its multi-year programme of work. In this regard, for the fifty-sixth session of the Commission, UN-Women prepared documentation for the session, including two reports of the Secretary-General on the priority theme, which provided in-depth perspectives on the situation of rural women, their roles in their communities and in national development, and ways to empower them in these roles (E/CN.6/2012/3 and E/CN.6/2012/4). Preparation of the reports on the priority theme was guided by the resolution on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session (resolution 66/129).

8. In addition to those reports, UN-Women prepared documentation for the panel discussions on the priority theme, emerging issues theme and the review theme. The documentation provided substantive analysis on the issues in order to inform Member States in their deliberations and further work in those areas. The summaries by the Chair on the high-level round table and the two panels on the priority theme were prepared by UN-Women, and were transmitted to the Economic and Social Council as input for the annual ministerial review at its substantive session of 2012.

9. UN-Women intensified its outreach to civil society organizations, with the aim of further increasing their contribution to and involvement in the session of the Commission and of establishing a strong basis for follow-up of the outcomes of the session. An unprecedented number of civil society representatives, including rural women and women at the grass-roots level, thus participated in the fifty-sixth session of the Commission and its side and parallel events.

10. While the discussions at the fifty-sixth session of the Commission did not result in agreed conclusions on the priority theme,[2] key resolutions were adopted, tackling such issues as women and children taken hostage in armed conflicts; gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters; maternal mortality

[1] See the reports of the Commission on the Status of Women on its forty-seventh, fifty-first, fifty-second and fifty-fifth sessions (E/2003/27, E/2007/27, E/2008/27 and E/2011/27).

[2] In the absence of agreed conclusions, the Chair made a summary available: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/documents/Chair_summary_AC_25_May_2012_AS%20POSTED.pdf.

and morbidity; indigenous women; and women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS.[3] The reports[4] of the Secretary-General prepared by UN-Women strengthened the substantive underpinnings of those resolutions and contributed to enriching discussions and the identification of actions to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women in the areas covered by the resolutions.

11. In preparation for the fifty-seventh session of the Commission and in response to strong expectations for a successful conclusion of the session with the priority theme of "Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls", UN-Women began consultations with key stakeholders at an early stage of the preparatory process for the session and to a much larger extent than undertaken in previous years. The Entity developed a comprehensive strategy focusing on preparing a strong substantive basis and broad-based support for strengthening normative standards on the priority theme. As part of this strategy, UN-Women undertook proactive and sustained engagement with stakeholders, including Member States, the United Nations system, civil society, academic experts and the private sector, for substantive preparations and to forge partnerships in the lead-up to the session. In the process, UN-Women engaged all parts of the Entity, including its field offices, which provide support to Governments in their preparations for the upcoming session of the Commission.

12. As part of its substantive preparations and to ensure a multi-sectoral perspective, UN-Women closely engaged with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in convening an Expert Group Meeting related to the priority theme, which was held from 17 to 20 September 2012 in Bangkok. The meeting brought together a broad group of stakeholders to contribute to a deeper understanding of the critical issues surrounding the priority theme. UN-Women also engaged the United Nations system in preparatory work through the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality.

13. UN-Women organized an online discussion on the priority theme, providing an open forum to identify measures and good practices from different parts of the world and in diverse resource settings and highlight any emerging issues and practices that should be considered. This broad outreach enabled UN-Women to gather a wide range of contributions, concerns and recommendations on the prevention of and response to violence against women and girls.[5] The perspectives gained during these discussions were reflected in the two reports of the Secretary-General on the priority theme prepared by UN-Women for the fifty-seventh session of the Commission (E/CN.6/2013/3 and E/CN.6/2013/4).

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[3] See resolutions 56/1-56/5, contained in the report of the Commission on its fifty-sixth session (E/2012/27 and Corr.1).

[4] See E/CN.6/2012/3, E/CN.6/2012/4, E/CN.6/2012/6, E/CN.6/2012/7, E/CN.6/2012/8, E/CN.6/2012/9, E/CN.6/2012/10 and E/CN.6/2012/11.

[5] Detailed recommendations are available from www.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Report-of-the-EGM-on-Prevention-of-Violence-against-Women-and-Girls.pdf. The report on the online discussion is available from www.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Online-Discussion-Report_CSW-57.pdf.

14. A stakeholders' forum was organized by UN-Women in December 2012 to mobilize champions, policymakers, practitioners from the field and negotiators and garner political will to forge a consensus towards the reaffirmation and deepening of the normative framework on eliminating violence against women and girls. The forum also aimed at strengthening multi-stakeholder networks and approaches to deepen the existing normative framework and accelerate its implementation. Attended by high-level participants, including ministers and a large number of permanent representatives, as well as by members of civil society and survivors of gender-based violence, the forum engaged participants in an open and frank discussion on the criticality of reaching a strong outcome on the priority theme of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission. The forum also raised awareness of existing commitments and standards for ending violence against women and girls; provided a platform for sharing ideas and strategies that bring results; and identified key areas and issues where consensus needs strengthening. Forum participants highlighted the crucial importance of the normative dimensions of the work on eliminating violence against women and girls and stressed the importance of ensuring implementation of the agreements that would be reached during the Commission's session.

15. Furthermore, UN-Women engaged key partners at the regional level to complement global efforts geared towards fostering consensus on a successful outcome of the Commission's fifty-seventh session. For example, the Entity worked with the Latin American Parliament to draft a resolution in support of a strong outcome to the upcoming session of the Commission. The resolution was adopted by nearly 200 parliamentarians from 23 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. After consultations with UN-Women, the Presidential Summit of the Union of South American Nations issued a Declaration that emphasized the commitment of Heads of State and Government to prevent, sanction and eradicate violence against women and girls. The Entity also partnered in three regional conferences with the Council of Europe, focusing on advocating for the signature and ratification of Council of Europe Convention No. 210 on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

16. Recognizing the important feedback loop between the implementation of commitments and the affirmation and deepening of normative agreements, UN-Women also launched the "Commit" initiative[6] to mobilize concrete commitments from Governments to prevent and address violence against women and girls. Through this initiative, the Entity is calling on Governments everywhere to make public commitments to end violence against women and girls.

17. The intense preparatory effort that UN-Women has launched towards the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women will culminate in the Entity's direct servicing of the meeting from 4 to 15 March 2013. To this end, UN-Women is working closely with the Bureau of the Commission to ensure a proactive approach so as to secure a successful outcome. This includes providing support to reach strong agreed conclusions that will contribute to accelerating the implementation of commitments to end violence against women and girls, including passing new legislation where it does not exist, effectively implementing legislation where it does, as well as prioritizing, investing in and scaling up successful prevention and response programmes.

[6] http://saynotoviolence.org/commit.

B. General Assembly

18. The Entity contributed to advancing gender equality in the deliberations of the General Assembly in a range of areas, from rule of law to sustainable development, to operational activities and others. At the sixty-seventh session of the Assembly, UN-Women actively engaged in preparations for the first-ever high-level meeting on the rule of law, hosted by the Assembly to discuss and agree on a forward-looking agenda on strengthening the rule of law at the national and international levels. Together with nine other United Nations system entities, UN-Women contributed to the drafting of the report of the Secretary-General (A/66/749, see also A/67/290) and participated in earlier consultations on the substance of the report. Elements of the report contributed to the first draft of the negotiated outcome document for the high-level meeting and UN-Women closely monitored negotiations on declaration adopted at the meeting (General Assembly resolution 67/1) in order to ensure that references to women's access to justice were retained.

19. The high-level meeting also became the platform for Member States to make pledges addressing gender equality or women's issues with respect to the rule of law. In preparation for the event, UN-Women conducted informal briefings to delegations, outlining suggested lists of pledges. A total of 12 Member States, regional groups and observers made initial pledges at the event.

20. In addition to its contributions to high-level events, UN-Women prepared parliamentary documentation, in which progress achieved and lessons learned in implementing earlier resolutions of the General Assembly were assessed. The documentation includes reports of the Secretary-General,[7] which were cited or quoted by delegations in elaborating resolutions, adopted at the sixty-seventh session of the Assembly, that address several areas of work, as described below.

21. For example, the recommendation to take greater action on issues that make women and girls vulnerable to trafficking and to consider awareness-raising measures (General Assembly resolution 67/145). Similarly a resolution on intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women (resolution 67/144) strengthens existing norms on this issue by, inter alia, calling on States to adopt various measures, including on protection and prevention, as well as data collection and research. It also calls for measures to promote and protect women's equal access to public health-care services, including for sexual and reproductive health, and reproductive rights.

22. General Assembly resolution 67/148 strongly reflected elements of the analysis contained in the report UN-Women had prepared on the subject (A/67/185), in which the Entity found that less than one third of Assembly resolutions adopted at the sixty-sixth session included a gender perspective. The resolution welcomes the commitment of UN-Women to supporting Member States' efforts to develop and strengthen norms, policies and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women as well as to integrate gender perspectives into sectoral policy and normative frameworks. It also commends UN-Women efforts to ensure coherence throughout the United Nations system in its advocacy for gender equality and the empowerment of women in the context of sustainable development. The resolution reiterates a call for United Nations entities to increase efforts to fully mainstream a

[7] See A/67/220, A/67/170, A/67/185 and A/67/347.

gender perspective into all issues under their consideration and within their mandates, as well as in all United Nations summits, conferences and special sessions and in their follow-up processes. Furthermore, the resolution calls for the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women to feature prominently in discussions on the post-2015 development framework, bearing in mind the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective.

23. The Entity's substantive support and advocacy were critical to Member States in reaching agreement on those resolutions. Support was provided through compiling drafts of resolutions, researching and offering clarification to Member States, as needed, and responding to questions arising during deliberations.

24. The report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the institutional arrangements for support of gender equality and the empowerment of women (A/67/201) presented an overview of the progress made in implementing General Assembly resolution 64/289, including through normative work. The report highlighted considerable progress made in ensuring the linkage between the normative and operational work of the Entity and was commended by a number of delegations as evidence of progress in responding to the founding mandate of UN-Women. The report also noted how UN-Women had used intergovernmental forums focusing specifically on gender equality to reaffirm and strengthen existing norms and standards and highlight gaps in implementation; and how the Entity had consistently pushed for gender equality and women's empowerment to be considered both as cross-cutting and stand-alone issues central to development, human rights and peace and security.

25. In support of efforts to identify ways of strengthening the further implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and at the request of Member States, UN-Women provided information and policy advice on options for commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The information helped to inform the deliberations of Member States on resolution 67/148. UN-Women is committed to playing a central role, taking advantage of its joint normative and operational mandates, in the preparatory activities for such commemorations.

26. Apart from the work of UN-Women on agenda items specifically related to gender equality and the empowerment of women, the Entity also intensified outreach and advocacy to ensure that an increased number of resolutions proposed by the Committees of the General Assembly, other than those of the Third Committee, reflect relevant gender equality norms and perspectives. As a result of this advocacy and support, the First Committee, in its resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (resolution 67/48), explicitly referred to the role of UN-Women in promoting implementation of all resolutions related to women in the context of peace and security. Of even greater significance is the resolution's call for the empowerment of women to participate in the design and implementation of disarmament and related efforts.

27. Building on the expertise it had gained at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, UN-Women helped secure broad support for the inclusion of gender perspectives in various resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session in relation to sustainable development. As a result, five

resolutions[8] on sustainable development contain a recognition of the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment and such references were additionally secured in the resolution on international trade and development (resolution 67/196).

28. As a composite entity with normative as well as operational mandates, UN-Women contributed to and closely followed the discussions of the General Assembly on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. UN-Women brought together its normative and operational experiences as contributions to the process. It provided input to the preparatory work undertaken by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, including on the development of data collection tools, and drafted a conference room paper in which it assessed gender mainstreaming in United Nations operational activities for development. In the context of the discussions of the Assembly, the Entity worked with Member States, as requested, to provide information on or to clarify language related to gender equality contained in the draft resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. The resolution adopted by the Assembly on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (resolution 67/226) reflects a number of UN-Women contributions and priorities. It calls upon the United Nations system to increase investment in, and focus on, gender equality and women's empowerment. The section on gender equality recognizes UN-Women's essential contribution to the United Nations system's work on gender equality and women's empowerment and calls on United Nations entities to mainstream gender perspectives and strengthen their accountability through their use of accountability instruments such as the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and country team performance indicators.

C. Economic and Social Council

29. UN-Women highlighted key aspects of the Entity's work to advance gender equality and women's empowerment through both its normative and operational work at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council for 2012. The Entity strived to give prominence and visibility to gender equality and women's empowerment priorities through the participation of senior managers in key segments of the session. Messages articulated in various forums contributed to the ministerial declaration, adopted at the high-level segment, on "Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the Millennium Development Goals".

30. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women participated in a number of high-level events, including the Development Cooperation Forum, at which she gave a keynote address and in the annual dialogue with Executive Heads of United Nations funds and programmes, which focused on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. In the Development Cooperation Forum, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director drew attention not only to the importance of the work on gender equality in both its operational and normative aspects, but also

[8] See General Assembly resolutions 67/203, 67/209, 67/210, 67/211 and 67/215.

to the nexus between gender equality and the broader issue of development cooperation.

31. UN-Women prepared the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2012/61), with contributions from the United Nations system. The report documented progress made in gender mainstreaming, identified the remaining gaps and challenges and summarized aspects of UN-Women work in leading, coordinating and promoting accountability of the United Nations system in its efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women.

32. The report highlighted the adoption by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and UN-Women leadership in its development. In its resolution 2012/24, the Economic and Social Council welcomed the adoption of the System-wide Action Plan as an accountability framework to be fully implemented by the United Nations system, called upon the system to actively engage in its roll-out and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council at its substantive session of 2013 on progress made in the implementation of the System-wide Action Plan. The System-wide Action Plan is firmly rooted in the mandate of UN-Women to lead, coordinate and promote accountability for the work of the United Nations system in gender equality and the empowerment of women. Since its adoption, with the support of UN-Women, eight United Nations entities[9] have fully aligned their gender equality policies, strategies and accountability frameworks performance indicators of the System-wide Action Plan and other entities are in the process of doing the same. The result of the first reporting cycle, which ends in mid-February 2013, will inform the next report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. It will also establish the baseline against which future progress in implementing the performance standards of the System-wide Action Plan will be measured.

33. UN-Women also partnered with the International Labour Organization (ILO) for a ministerial breakfast round table on decent work and women's economic empowerment. The event was a platform for gender-sensitive dialogue with Governments, guided by the evidence-based concept note prepared by UN-Women and ILO. It was an occasion to forge partnerships with Governments to advance and promote gender perspectives in the ministerial declaration and in carrying out programmatic work related to this theme at the global, regional and country levels. Recommendations and the exchange of good practices on labour policies, decent work and women's empowerment that emanated from the discussions were reflected in the ministerial declaration, wherein Member States recognized the importance of promoting and protecting the rights of women workers, of taking action to remove structural and legal barriers to, and of eliminating stereotypical attitudes towards, gender equality at work, and initiating positive steps towards the promotion of equal pay for equal work or for work of equal value. As a follow-up, UN-Women and ILO

[9] The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

collaborated on the publication of the flagship report on Global Employment Trends for Women, which was launched in December 2012. The report analyses gender gaps in unemployment, employment, labour force participation, vulnerability and segregation in jobs and economic sectors and provides a set of policy options to promote gender equality in employment, especially in times of economic and financial crisis.

34. As part of its contribution to the preparations of the Economic and Social Council for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, UN-Women organized a side event on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP). The event was a useful platform to advance the discussions of Member States on the same topic at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. At the side event, panellists from Member States and the United Nations system emphasized the importance of ensuring that the work on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment be a common responsibility of the United Nations system and that the creation of UN-Women should not relieve other agencies of the mandate to deliver on gender equality and women's empowerment. Similarly underscored was the importance of accountability mechanisms, including the System-wide Action Plan, as tools to hold agencies accountable and ensure gender mainstreaming in their work.

D. Security Council

35. The Entity continued to actively promote and support the implementation of Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security (1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010)) at the global, regional and national levels. UN-Women has contributed to the effective integration of these resolutions across the work of the Council. It has strengthened the evidence base for policy development and implementation through research and analysis on matters such as systems for early alerts of security threats to women; levels of participation of women in peace processes and the consequences thereof; the impact of women's employment on the speed and sustainability of post-conflict recovery; levels of financing for gender equality and women's empowerment in post-conflict situations; and modalities for effective reparations programmes for war crimes perpetrated against women.

36. For the annual review by the Security Council of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), UN-Women coordinated the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General to the Council on women and peace and security (S/2012/732) through an inter-agency consultative process. The report assesses the state of implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in the areas of conflict prevention, women's participation in peacebuilding, protection from gender-based violence, and gender-responsive relief and recovery and puts forward a set of policy recommendations for the consideration of the Council and the Member States.

37. Many of the elements presented in the report were reflected in the presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/23) adopted by the Security Council in connection with the annual review. In the statement, the Council recognized and welcomed the role of UN-Women in contributing to the implementation of resolutions on women and peace and security and noted with satisfaction the increased coordination and

coherence in policy and programming for women and girls within the United Nations system, welcoming efforts to avoid duplication and overlap since the creation of UN-Women. The statement also reflected new elements and concerns raised in the report of the Secretary-General, notably the need to prevent an erosion of the protection environment for women and girls during and after the drawdown of United Nations missions. For the first time, it also reflected the stress placed in the report on the crucial role played by women's civil society organizations in conflict prevention and peacemaking and the Council noted the value of gender expertise in peacekeeping and post-conflict contexts.

38. A number of initiatives led by UN-Women in close collaboration with the United Nations system and other partners in the area of women and peace and security in the past two years have helped to drive and strengthen normative work in this area, including through improved tracking and monitoring of results. These include the agreement and incremental reporting on the initial set of indicators to track the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), steps taken to implement the seven-point action plan of the Secretary-General on gender-responsive peacebuilding (see S/2012/732 and A/65/354-S/2010/466), the adoption of the United Nations strategic results framework on women and peace and security, and the civilian capacity review and related review of the United Nations gender architecture in post-conflict countries. These initiatives have improved documentation of good practices, the assessment of gaps and challenges and the identification of shared targets and areas that need further attention, all of which contribute to the development of more evidence-based policy recommendations and improved normative work.

39. In the past year, UN-Women also provided substantive inputs to the reports of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict (A/67/499-S/2012/746) and strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution (A/66/811) and inputs for field missions of the Security Council. In addition, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director continued to provide special briefings to the Council on topics related to women and peace and security. The briefings are an important complement to the annual reviews and a channel for highlighting good practices and bringing to the attention of the Council specific areas and situations of concern related to the implementation of global commitments on women, peace and security for action. UN-Women, in partnership with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security also continued to offer technical updates on women, peace and security to new members of the Council. Complementing these initiatives at the global level, UN-Women worked closely with the League of Arab States to contextualize the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) for the Arab region. This resulted in the signing of the document "Protection of Arab women: peace and security" by the League of Arab States and UN-Women, which sets the framework for the development of plans and programmes on human security for Arab women.

40. UN-Women normative support for intergovernmental processes in the area of peace and security continued to benefit from operational work to implement commitments on women, peace and security, in such areas as: strengthening women's peace coalitions; capacity-building for peacekeepers to help detect and prevent conflict-related sexual violence; support for building justice and security

institutions that protect women and girls from violence and discrimination and for initiatives to promote public services that respond to women's needs, including on ensuring access to economic opportunities; building women's engagement in public decision-making; and support for the development and implementation of regional and national action plans and strategies for the implementation of commitments relating to women, peace and security. The "Sourcebook on women, peace and security" launched by UN-Women in October 2012[10] captures the linkages between the operational and normative work and contributes to both policy and practice.

E. Engagement in selected sectoral intergovernmental processes

41. Through its substantive contribution, technical expertise, advocacy, awareness-raising and outreach to Member States, UN-Women was successful in securing references on the importance of gender equality and advancing women's rights and their empowerment in the outcomes of various sectoral intergovernmental processes. These included the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development; the thirteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; and the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. UN-Women is also contributing to ongoing processes on the development agenda beyond 2015 and sustainable development goals.

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

42. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development delivered important gains for gender equality with the reaffirmation in the outcome document of the centrality of gender equality and women's vital role, participation and leadership in all three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental). UN-Women strategically and actively engaged throughout the entire process surrounding the Conference. It made comprehensive contributions to the draft of the outcome document, proactively engaged in the negotiation process through outreach and technical assistance to Member States, the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference and the secretariat for the Conference, contributed to United Nations system messaging and worked to strengthen partnerships, including through its collaboration with civil society, in particular, the women's major group and the private sector. Furthermore, UN-Women intensified its communications and advocacy through the media, including social media, and organized a multi-stakeholder Women Leaders' Forum, which brought together Governments, civil society, the private sector, academia and other advocates to highlight strategies and programmes that foster gender equality and sustainable development. UN-Women also convened women Heads of State and Government in a Women Leaders' High-level Summit, where they issued a joint "Call to action" to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of sustainable development.

43. These efforts catalysed political will among Governments and were instrumental in the endorsement of an outcome document (General Assembly resolution 66/288) that reaffirms Governments' commitment to the Beijing

[10] Available from www.unwomen.org/publications/un-women-sourcebook-on-women-peace-and-security/.

Declaration and Platform for Action and recognizes women's vital role, participation and leadership in all three dimensions of sustainable development. Gender equality and women's empowerment are identified as a thematic area in the framework for action and follow-up. In the outcome document, Member States commit to ensuring women's equal rights, access and opportunities for participation and leadership in the economy, society, political decision-making and resource allocation and affirm that green economy policies should enhance the welfare of women and mobilize their full potential, and ensure the equal contribution of women and men.

44. In the outcome document, donors and international organizations, including the United Nations system organizations, international financial institutions, regional banks and major groups, including the private sector, are invited to fully integrate commitments and considerations on gender equality and the empowerment of women and to ensure the participation of women and effective gender mainstreaming in their decision-making and full programming cycle. Those same actors were also invited to play a supportive role in the efforts of developing countries to do the same.

45. UN-Women helped secure explicit references to women, women's empowerment and gender equality in 12 critical thematic areas, including poverty eradication, food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture, energy, water and sanitation, health and population, employment, decent work for all and social protection, and disaster risk reduction.

46. The outcome document also laid a solid basis for the inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment in the consideration of Sustainable Development Goals and the future development framework.

Thirteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

47. UN-Women actively participated in the thirteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, including in a high-level event on women in development. The event was critical in sensitizing Ministers to the need to give a prominent place to gender equality and women's empowerment in the outcome documents of the meeting. UN-Women highlighted the critical nexus between empowering rural women, global food security, trade and sustainable development and underscored the importance of linking the deliberations to related international norms, such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the General Assembly resolution on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (resolution 66/129), among others. The Entity's work with countries to implement gender-responsive budgeting and planning was also highlighted as an important tool to strengthen these linkages in practice.

48. Joint efforts with the secretariat of the Conference and targeted advocacy resulted in the inclusion of several gender-specific references in the two outcome documents of the Conference. The declaration adopted by Member States, the "Doha Manar" (TD/500/Add.2) emphasizes the importance of creating opportunities, capacities and decent jobs for women and the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment to harness the full potential of the whole population in support of fuller human, economic and social development. The "Doha Mandate" (TD/500/Add.1) contains the recognition that gender equality and women's empowerment are important cross-cutting issues for inclusive and sustainable

growth and development. Building on that mandate, the Conference and UN-Women have increased cooperation in the field of women's economic empowerment through initiatives to build evidence and knowledge in this area and through targeted regional and country projects.

Eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

49. Building on the gains in securing gender-specific language in decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions, UN-Women attendance at the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties helped ensure that women's needs, rights and opportunities and considerations regarding gender equality, as well as appropriate gender-specific references, are reflected in the decisions adopted at the Conference. In the lead-up to and at the Conference of the Parties, UN-Women engaged with key delegations, United Nations system entities and civil society partners and advocates for the incorporation of a gender perspective in the decisions to be adopted.

50. UN-Women was commended for its role and contribution in the adoption of the decision on promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in negotiations on the Framework Convention and in the representation of Parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol. The Entity provided substantive knowledge on norms in this area, some of which were included in the initial draft of the decision, as well as technical assistance and substantive support throughout negotiations. Parties sought its expertise in the course of amending the text of the decision.

51. The aforementioned decision represents a significant contribution to advancing gender equality in the process surrounding the Framework Convention. In it, the Conference of the Parties adopted a goal of gender balance in bodies established under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, in order to improve women's participation and inform more effective climate change policy that addresses the needs of women and men equally. In addition, current and future chairs of such bodies were invited to be guided by this goal when setting up informal negotiating groups and consultation mechanisms, and Parties were invited to strive for gender balance in their delegations to sessions under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol.

52. The decision also incorporates a reporting mechanism whereby the secretariat of the Framework Convention was requested to present an annual report tracking the progress made towards the goal of gender balance to the Conference of the Parties for its consideration. Of utmost significance in the text is the decision to add gender and climate change as a new standing item on the agenda of sessions of the Conference of the Parties. Together with other advocates, UN-Women undertook outreach to delegations to secure gender-specific references in other decisions, including on loss and damage, national adaptation plans, the Climate Technology Centre and Network, and the Doha work programme on article 6 of the Convention pertaining to education, training and public awareness of climate change and its effects.

Development agenda beyond 2015 and sustainable development goals

53. UN-Women is actively involved in the work on the development agenda beyond 2015 and the sustainable development goals, in collaboration with civil society organizations, the United Nations system and other partners. UN-Women is co-leading, with UNICEF, the global inequalities consultation, one of the 11 global thematic consultations convened by the United Nations Development Group. Engaging a broad range of stakeholders through online consultations, UN-Women and partner entities aim to present a solid document containing recommendations on how to address inequalities in the development agenda beyond 2015 that could inform the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the intergovernmental process discussing the sustainable development goals. The Entity is also contributing to the thematic and country-level consultations by ensuring that the voices of women and women's organizations are heard in country consultations organized by resident coordinators and country teams. UN-Women representatives are also working closely with country teams to ensure that gender equality concerns are made central to the process.

54. UN-Women is closely following developments on the sustainable development goals process. It has provided technical inputs, which were shared with Member States, the United Nations system and members of the High-level Panel.

55. UN-Women membership and representation in task forces, coordination groups and task teams created for these processes positions the Entity to contribute directly to the conceptualization and framing of the development agenda beyond 2015. Within UN-Women, substantive work is being carried out to build the case for a stand-alone gender equality goal and for mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment in the other goals. This is coupled with the development of key messages and their dissemination, and the strengthening of UN-Women advocacy work and outreach to key stakeholders, including Member States and civil society.

III. Implementation of the policy guidance by the Commission on the Status of Women

56. Through its work, the Commission on the Status of Women provides guidance to Governments, entities of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector and other relevant actors on actions required for the achievement of goals relating to issues on the agenda of the Commission and especially with regard to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

57. UN-Women, as the substantive secretariat of the Commission and in line with its areas of work, continues to play a role in the implementation of that policy guidance, both as a primary actor and in its support to other stakeholders.

58. The guidance to promote the incorporation, integration or mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the development and implementation of national legislation, policies, strategies, programmes and projects has been selected as a focus in the present report, given its recurrence in the agreed conclusions of the Commission. Key actions that contributed to strengthening the normative basis for the

incorporation of gender perspectives into national level policies and implementation have been clearly identified.

59. Owing to its combined normative and operational mandate, UN-Women is also well placed to support actors at the country level in implementing that policy guidance, and in particular to ensure that work at the country level is based on and aims to further strengthen existing norms. UN-Women has thus supported the implementation of the guidance of the Commission through its operational work, especially in priority areas of work identified in the Entity's strategic plan, 2011-2013.

60. The Entity has provided support in 71 countries to enhance legal frameworks and national capacities; in 67 countries, to promote women's economic opportunities; in 85 countries, to work to end violence against women and girls; in 37 countries, to improve women's role and leadership in peace, security and humanitarian response; and in 65 countries, to work to promote gender-responsive planning and budgeting.

61. In partnership with the United Nations system, UN-Women continues to support national efforts to expand economic opportunities for women through the incorporation of a gender perspective in policies and programmes.[11] For example, the joint programme of UN-Women, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and WFP on "Accelerating progress towards the economic empowerment of rural women", launched in September 2012, focuses on empowering rural women through promoting legislative and policy reforms for the effective enforcement of rural women's land rights and their access to decent wage employment, social protection and infrastructure, and providing policy assistance to Governments to support their efforts to mainstream gender into their food, agriculture, nutrition and rural development policies. The five-year programme will be implemented in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, the Niger and Rwanda.

62. Since becoming one of the co-sponsoring agencies for the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in June 2012, UN-Women is now well positioned to take forward the guidance of the Commission related to gender equality, women's empowerment and HIV/AIDS. In 2011-2012, UN-Women worked with national AIDS coordinating authorities in 22 countries to integrate gender equality perspectives into HIV strategies, policies, laws, institutions, budgets and accountability frameworks. With UN-Women support, a gender audit helped the National AIDS Authority and Ministry of Women Affairs of Cambodia define key advocacy points to back the integration of gender dimensions across the 2011-2015 National Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS. In the Sudan, UN-Women joined UNAIDS in educating those working on the country's National AIDS Control Programme about the gender dimensions of HIV, resulting in the adoption of a variety of related measures in the Sudan National AIDS Strategic Plan 2010-2014.

63. Gender-responsive budgeting has been identified as a key strategy to promote the incorporation, integration or mainstreaming of gender perspectives into national

[11] See the reports of the Commission on the Status of Women on its fifty-second, fifty-third, fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions (E/2008/27, E/2009/27, E/2010/27 and Corr.1 and E/2011/27).

plans, policies and programmes. This has been reaffirmed in the agreed conclusions of several sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women.[12]

64. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UN-Women provided technical support to the Government for the adoption of its first strategy on gender-responsive budgeting. The strategy includes developing gender mainstreaming norms and guidelines to ensure that men and women benefit equally from public sector services. The official government budget circular for 2013 was amended to require line ministries to develop output indicators disaggregated by gender, in order to measure the impact of government programmes on women and men.

65. In Zimbabwe, the Women's Resource Centre and Network, a grantee of the Fund for Gender Equality, is building capacity in 13 sector ministries, including health, water, resources and energy, and small and medium enterprises, to mainstream gender planning and costing in their work so that women can access essential services effectively. Capacity-building efforts have also been extended to legislators, advocates and civil society organizations to help them better understand the importance of gender-responsive budgeting and thereby help ensure its effective application.

66. As a result of the grantee's advocacy around gender-responsive budgeting, the Government of Zimbabwe initiated the Women's Development Fund to support women's economic initiatives. The project and stakeholders also influenced the drafting of the National Budget for 2012 to include specific allocations towards reproductive health and maternal health and the improvement of the lives of rural women through allocations to line ministries such as water, resources and energy.

67. An innovative example of incorporating gender perspectives into urban planning and implementing the policy guidance of the Commission is the Safe Cities global initiative. Initiated by UN-Women with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), local governments, women's networks, civil society partners and other United Nations entities, the approach emphasizes the prevention of violence, government accountability, community mobilization and participation, the empowerment of women at the grass-roots level, the engaging of men and boys, and overall improvement of neighbourhoods and sustainable and inclusive urban development. From its initial five pilot cities in Cairo, Kigali, New Delhi, Quito and Port Moresby, it has since expanded via a new joint programme with UNICEF and UN-Habitat to include Greater Beirut (Lebanon), Dushanbe, Metro Manila (Philippines), Marrakesh (Morocco), Nairobi, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), San José and Tegucigalpa. Initial results show that local governments have taken active measures to make urban spaces more gender-sensitive and reduce violence against women and girls, including by amending city legislations, plans and budgets to incorporate "safe cities" measures, enhancing women's safety and improving gender-responsive policing services through gender-responsive social protection schemes, and empowering local women to identify safety and security conditions through women's safety audits.

68. The passing of a parity law in Senegal in 2010, with the support from UN-Women contributed to increasing the political participation of women in the country. UN-Women supported a coalition of Senegalese women from the country's

[12] See the reports of the Commission on its fiftieth, fifty-first, fifty-second, fifty-third and fifty-fifth sessions (E/2006/27 and Corr. 1 and 2, E/2007/27, E/2008/27, E/2009/27 and E/2011/27).

various political parties and women researchers in advocating for the passing of a law providing for equal distribution of seats between women and men in parliament and full equal representation in all elected and semi-elected bodies and at all levels. UN-Women provided technical support to the draft legislation committee and supported a sustained large-scale public awareness initiative in collaboration with national partners so as to garner greater support for the adoption of the parity law. The parliamentary election in 2012 demonstrated progress in gender equality with 65 Senegalese women elected as representatives (out of 150 seats).

69. Such examples illustrate some of the ways in which UN-Women implemented the policy guidance of the Commission through its operational work. In the coming years, UN-Women will heighten and systematize its ongoing efforts to bring the best practices and lessons learned from its operations on the ground into the intergovernmental debates and deliberations, in order to create a feedback loop so that global efforts to strengthen norms and standards, along with national actions, inform and complement each other and make a real difference in women's daily lives.

IV. Conclusions

70. **Building on its work in the past two years and on important lessons learned, including from its own analysis, UN-Women successfully brought greater attention to the gender equality agenda in intergovernmental processes and helped to forge a mutually reinforcing link between normative work and its implementation on the ground. In implementing the policy guidance of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Entity, beyond bringing concrete results for women and girls on the ground, also contributed to deepening and enlarging the normative base and to informing intergovernmental processes. Member States should keep leveraging the unique role of the Commission on the Status of Women as the primary global body for building consensus on norms and standards to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as monitor their implementation. UN-Women will further support the work of the Commission and contribute to the implementation of the outcomes of the sessions of the Commission.**

71. **UN-Women will continue to develop and strengthen the seamlessness of the link between the normative and operational aspects of its work. Given the synergy between its normative and operational activities and the comprehensive delivery by UN-Women of its mandate, Member States may wish to consider how these activities may best be reflected in future reporting.**